

The Corporate Council on Out of School Time

Facts & Tips for Parents

Guide to SCHOOL HOLIDAY and VACATION CARE



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Guide to School Holiday and Vacation Care

School holidays and vacations are often welcome breaks for children. For working parents they can be a real challenge! This Guide can help you find adequate care for your child during these times.



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The Corporate Council on Out of School Time

The Corporate Council On Out-Of-School Time is making this guide available to its employees to assist them to better meet their work and family needs. The Corporate Council On Out-Of-School Time includes representatives from a variety of New York City employers who have come together to address specific concerns of their employees with school-age children.

Through collaborative corporate initiatives, the Council seeks to improve both the availability and quality of school age and youth programs in communities where they do business and where their employees live.

The Corporate Council is coordinated and staffed by Child Care, Inc., a non-profit child care resource and referral agency. For more information on the Corporate Council, contact:

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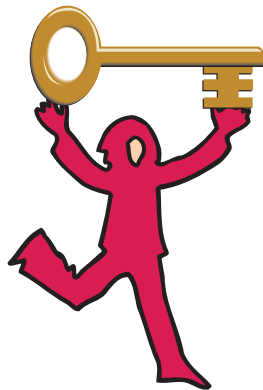
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PART I

How to Find and Select a Holiday or Vacation Program for Your Child

Finding a Program

School holidays and vacation weeks are a challenge for working parents, who often find themselves pulled between responsibilities at home and at work. Some parents schedule personal days or use their sick leave in order to be home during school holidays. Others may bring their children to work, while some parents arrange complicated schedules where children are moved from place to place with little consistency and often few constructive activities.



Key to Success: PLAN AHEAD

Last minute arrangements rarely work well for children, parents or employers!

Child care services for these times do exist. This guide outlines the types of services offered, the locations, and the costs. These programs allow your children to spend holidays and vacations in a relaxed and constructive environment. Many incorporate field trips, visits to museums, special sports events, and holidays themes into their program. Some programs are private, while others are publicly subsidized.

For the five New York City boroughs, this guide lists specific holiday programs. Programs included in this guide will accept children not regularly enrolled in their program. For families outside of New York City we have included ideas on how to find programs in other areas and information on CCR&R's (Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies) that can help.

Thinking About Options

Parents have a variety of options and should consider a number of factors when making plans for school holidays. Clearly, the age of your children and the types of activities they enjoy are important. Are you looking for a part-day or full-day arrangement? Will your child be comfortable in a new setting with a large number of children? Do you want an organized program or a smaller setting? We have outlined some options for you to consider:



Does your child's school offer a program? Will there be activities or programs organized for these days?

Can your child's after school program provide care on these days? What would it take for them to offer this kind of program?

Should you use a program close to work or to your home?

Do the public libraries offer special programs or activities during this time? Do the Y's (or other civic recreational programs) schedule special activities? Do community museums offer special programs?

Are there college students or high school students available to structure a day of activities with your child and several other children?

In your community, do family day care providers take additional children for holidays and vacations? Many providers do have special programming for school age children and could do this. Check with your local CCR&R service for information on Family Day Care Networks that can refer you to providers who may be able to help.

Talk to other working parents who face the same situation. By joining together, you can create new options for school-age programs. For example, your child's present school-age program may be able to provide this service for an additional fee if you can guarantee a certain number of children or raise some funds to support the expansion. A bake sale or raffle may be all your program needs to expand its services on school vacations and holidays.

Interested parents often provide the stimulus for new programs. One organization indicated they could offer a program if 15 or more children enrolled... all that they needed was two weeks notice.

Interested parents often provide the stimulus for new programs.

Average Fees for School Holiday and Vacations

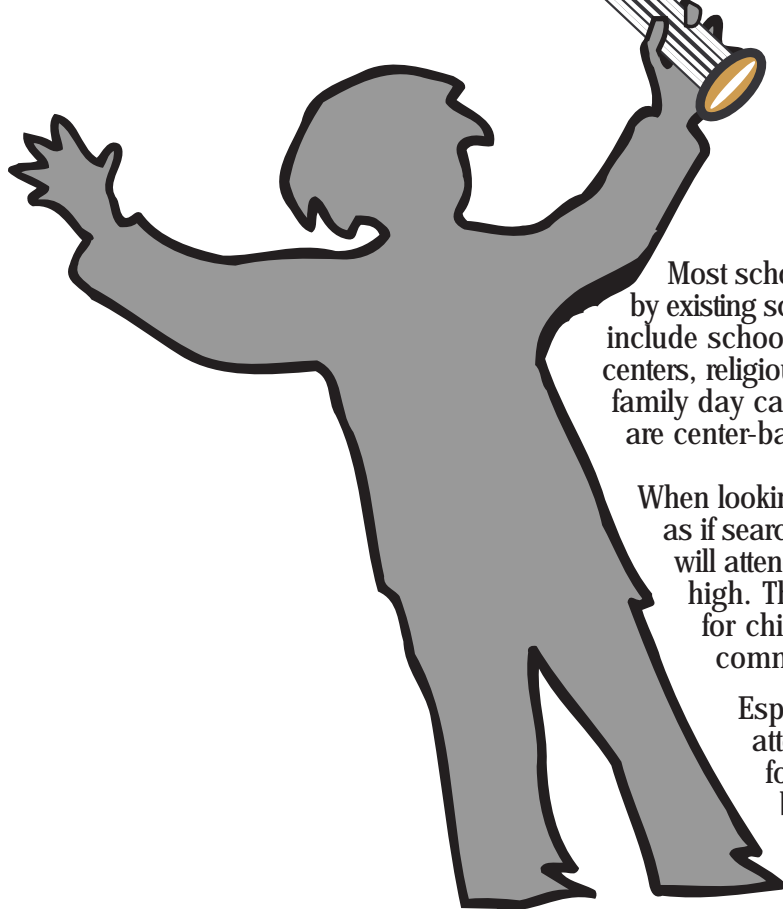
In New York City, the fees for programs range from \$25-\$45 per day, with the cost often varying by neighborhood. If you live in Brooklyn but work in Manhattan, you should expect to pay more for programs in Manhattan.

If you are eligible for subsidized care and currently use such services for after school, there may be a slight additional charge for the full day-program. Some youth and recreational programs are free. Enrollment fills quickly, so apply and register early.

What to



for in a Quality Program



Most school vacation and holiday programs are operated by existing school-age programs. School-age settings typically include schools, community agencies and centers, day care centers, religious institutions, summer day camp facilities, and family day care homes. The services described in this guide are center-based programs.

When looking for child care services, use the same criterion as if searching for a full-time program. Although your child will attend less frequently, your standards need to remain high. The facility must provide a relaxing atmosphere for children to have fun, explore new activities, and communicate openly with each other and the staff.

Especially for a program that your child does not attend regularly, it is important that the staff plan for welcoming new children and helping them become part of the group. A welcoming atmosphere is even more important in this type of program than in your child's regular school or after school program.

MAKING SURE THE PROGRAM MEETS

YOUR NEEDS

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

AGE-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

EXPERIENCED STAFF

A quality vacation program should provide all of the following:

A physical environment that is comfortable and safe, offering opportunities for both indoor and outdoor play. Space should be ample and inviting to children.

Opportunities for social interaction between children of same and different ages on a one-to-one basis as well as in small groups. Counselors need to be particularly sensitive to those children having to make new friends on holidays and vacations.

Opportunities for children to engage in a variety of age-appropriate activities. Such activities include drama, music, creative arts, cooking, creative writing, movement and dance, games, sports, and field trips. The program should include opportunities for quiet activities, as well as active play. Children should be allowed to select many of the activities and projects in which they engage.

A warm, supportive environment that encourages growth, learning, the development of a positive self-image, and a sense of competence. The program and the staff should encourage and promote independent decision-making, responsibility, and self-direction, as well as experimentation, problem-solving and a healthy view of competition.

Caring, resourceful, experienced staff who are positive role models for the children. The staff should treat the children as individuals, with respect and show no bias or favoritism based on sex, race, religion, or ethnic background. They should talk with the children and get involved in the activities, assisting rather than directing or dominating. The staff should be trained in CPR, and in working with groups of children; they should receive on-going supervision and in-service training.



EWING THE CENTER

After you have identified programs that might meet your needs, phone the center for more specific information. It is helpful to have a list of questions ready. Here are some possibilities:

- ^ Is the program licensed or registered by appropriate state and local agencies?
- ^ How large are the groups for children of your child's age?
- ^ What is the staff-to-child ratio?
- ^ What are the qualifications of those who supervise the children?
- ^ Are they certified teachers? College students? High school students?
- ^ What education and training have the staff members received? What training do they receive on an on-going basis?
- ^ How long has the program been in operation?
- ^ What kinds of activities are available? Are children permitted to select activities?
- ^ Are there additional charges or special fees, such as for registration, field trips, materials, snacks, or late pick-ups?

Here are some additional questions especially for holiday and vacation programs:

- ^ How does the program help children to quickly feel at home?
- ^ What special activities are there for the children attending? Is there anything related to your child's special interests?
- ^ What training has the staff received related to holiday/vacation programs and back up care?
- ^ Does the program take advantage of community activities?
- ^ What opportunities are there to learn how your child is doing?
- ^ Are there other parents you can speak to about the program?



Visiting the Facility

Although time consuming, it is important to visit the facility before enrolling in the program. It will give you a chance to observe the activities, noting the interaction among children and between the staff, as well as the children's responses to activities. Visiting the facility beforehand with your child may also relieve some of your child's anxiety (and your own) about occasionally attending the program, while helping to build excitement for the fun holidays and vacations ahead. This will be difficult for programs that operate only during the summer but you may be able to at least visit the site.

Although time consuming, it is important to visit the facility before enrolling in the program.

More information

This guide is designed to help you plan for appropriate care and interesting activities for your children during school holidays. Remember that your child care referral service can provide you with more detailed information, including specific programs in your immediate area. If your employer does not have a referral service, we have included a list of metropolitan area referral services at the end of this Guide.

The situation for school age child care and back up care is changing all the time. Programs are being added and expanded. Some "School's Out" programs providing care just for school holidays are being developed. Check with the Board of Education—in some areas the BOE is beginning to offer "Breakaway" programs during school vacations. Also check with your employer to see if there is back-up care provided by your company.

Finally, some of the larger providers in the New York area are expanding their services. In addition to the programs listed in this guide and your resource and referral agency, you might contact the following providers to see if they have programs available in your area:

Boys and Girls Clubs: Some clubhouses do have holiday/vacation programs. Call 800-854-2582 for information on programs near you.

Beacons: The Beacons, located in public schools in each district, often provide holiday/vacation programs. The Department of Youth and Community Services (DYCD) has a website at www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/dycd that can give you locations of Beacons near you. You can also call the YouthLine at 800-246-4646 for information on Beacons in your school district.

YM/YWCA: Many Y's have holiday/vacation programs located in their branches or in public schools. Call 212-630-960X for

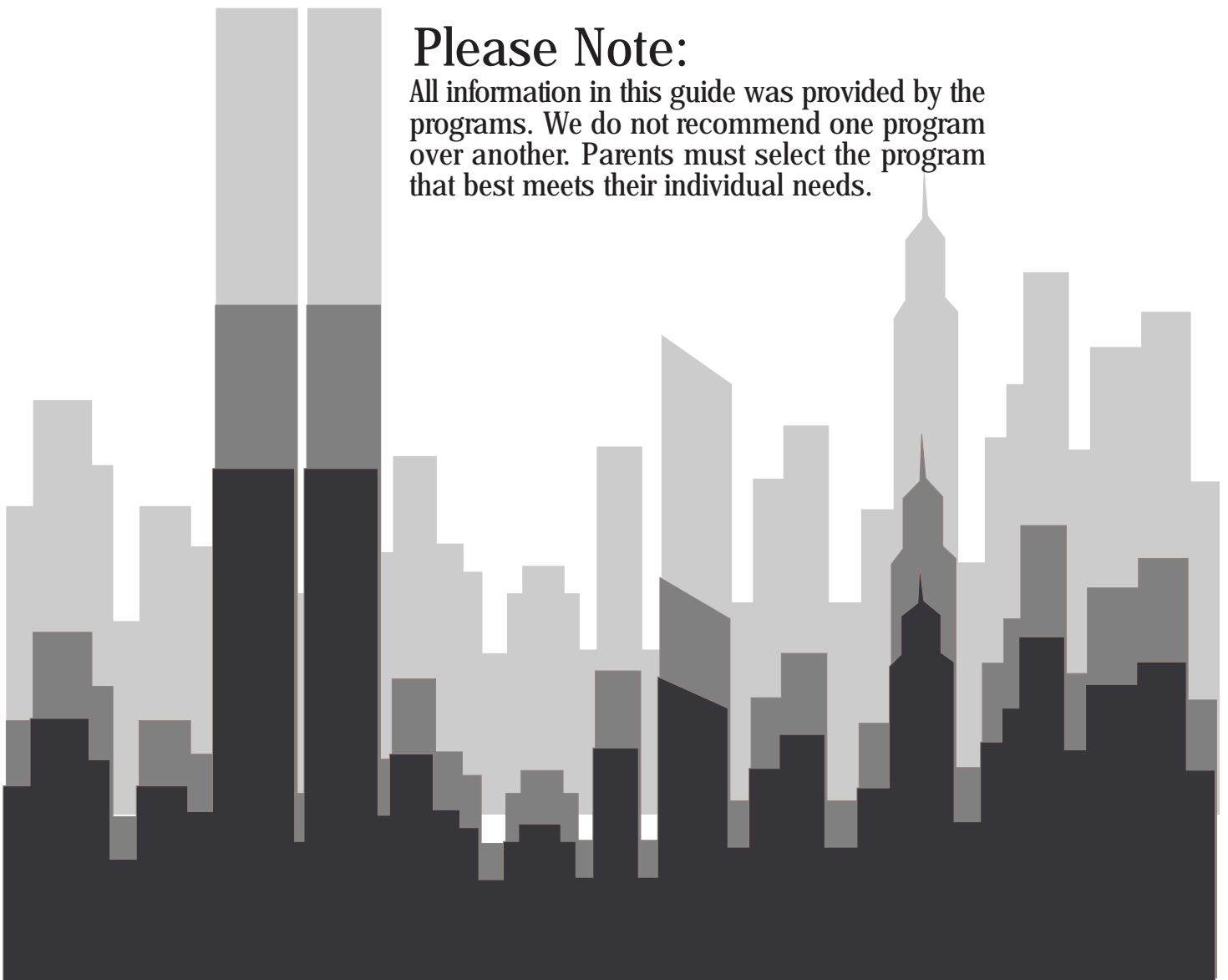
Programs and the information about them covered in this guide are subject to change; always double-check with the program.

PART II

Holiday/Vacation Programs in New York City

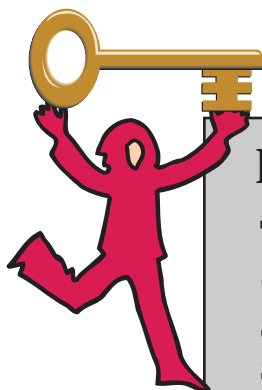
Please Note:

All information in this guide was provided by the programs. We do not recommend one program over another. Parents must select the program that best meets their individual needs.



PART III

Finding Programs Outside of New York City



Key to Success: ADVANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The process for finding Holiday and Vacation care anywhere is very similar and involves several steps. A major key to success in finding a good solution for your child(ren) and family is starting to make arrangements well in advance of the times you will need them.

Steps to finding holiday and vacation care

Start with your child's school. Some schools do provide programming on these days. If schools in your community are closed on days the school is not open this will not be an option. However, if the buildings are (or can be) open, this could provide a site for the school or another agency (day care or youth program) to operate a program.

Contact your child care referral service. They will have information about programs available in the community and ideas to help you find a workable solution for you and your child. If your employer has a referral service, consult them. We have also included information on Child Care Resource & Referral Services for the New York Metropolitan area and beyond. These organizations work closely with service providers in the community.

Talk with other parents—parents at your job and parents of your child's classmates. Everyone has the same problem. There may be some solutions that you can't accomplish by yourself but that together you may be able to achieve. Consider some of the ideas listed here—most of which would be much more attractive to your child if a friend were involved.

If your child attends an after school program that currently isn't open on school holidays and vacations, talk to them about starting such a service. We have talked to some providers who said they would start these programs if they knew a certain number of children would attend (generally for an additional fee for the extra time).

Check with the large school age and youth programs in your community. "Y's" in many communities provide Holiday Camps and other short term services. Look up YM/YWCA or YM/YWHA in your local phone book to find programs near you. The Boys and Girls Clubs also sometimes provide holiday programs. You can call 800-854-2582 to find the Club nearest to you or your office.

An important option to consider is a family day or group family child care day care program. Family child care providers care for children in their homes, and some have developed particular expertise and programming for school age children. This may include activities like drama and music, hands-on science, and sports, as well as trips. Your referral service can direct you to providers who enroll school age children and provide care on holidays and vacation weeks.

Another potential resource is teenagers in your community.

Another potential resource is teenagers in your community. Often high school and college students have vacations coinciding with the school's. A young person who knows your child and the community may be able and interested in caring for your child and developing some interesting activities for the days the school is closed.



Some agencies, such as “Y’s,” youth programs, day care programs, or community centers may offer training for young people through which they can get a “babysitter” certificate. The training tends to focus on health and safety issues but may also include activities, discipline, and other topics. A local program that works with teenagers might be interested in providing this kind of training for young people in the neighborhood.

An option for older school age children is to explore a particular interest. Does your child have a special interest? Science? Writing? Dinosaurs? Astronomy? Dance? Check with museums, theatres, community centers and other agencies to see if they have special events on the days schools are closed. This can be especially successful if a friend also shares this interest. Perhaps one child’s parent can provide transportation going and another on the way back.

Above all, be creative and give yourself enough time to explore a variety of solutions.



Appendix

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R's) offer consultation and information to thousands of parents each month who are seeking assistance in finding the best possible care and education for their children. Each CCR&R maintains information on child care resources in their community. These organizations also work to expand services and improve quality. They know the child care community and can help you in exploring options. The parent counselors at the CCR&R can help you find resources to meet your family's needs, and provide information to assist you in making your decisions. Some CCR&R's charge a small fee for their services; others offer free information to parents.

Your employer, through the Human Resources Department or the Work and Family Life Department of the company probably provides this kind of consultation to you as a company benefit.

If you do not have child care consultation services through your employer, you can call the local CCR&R in your area. Listed below are the CCR&R's in the Metro New York Region as well as the national organization that can help you find your local CCR&R.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)

1319 Seventh Street, NW (Suite 201)
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 393-5501 or (800) 424-2246



Wherever you are in the country, NACCRRA can refer you to the CCR&R nearest to you or your employer. NACCRRA's members are CCR&R's throughout the US. The organization promotes the development, maintenance and expansion of quality child care resource and referral services through regional conferences, technical support services and a quarterly newsletter. NACCRRA also provides a national voice for child care resources and referral on issues affecting the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care for all families regardless of income or where they live.



METROPOLITAN AREA CCR&R's

NEW YORK CITY:

Child Care, Inc. (212) 929-4999
275 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10001

Child Development Support Corporation (718) 398-6738
1213 Fulton Street
Brooklyn, New York 11216

Chinese/American Planning Council (212) 941-0030
480 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, New York 10013

Committee for Hispanic Children & Families (212) 206-8043
140 West 22nd Street, Suite 301
New York, New York 10011

Day Care Council of New York (212) 213-2423
10 East 34th Street
New York, New York 10016

NYC Child Care Resource & Referral Consortium (888) 469-5999
[Toll free number for all 5 boroughs]

LONG ISLAND

Child Care Council of Nassau (516) 358-9288
925 Hempstead Turnpike, Suite 400
Franklin Square, New York 11010

Child Care Council of Suffolk (516) 462-0303
60 Calvert Avenue
Commack, New York 11725

DUTCHESS/ORANGE/ROCKLAND/WESTCHESTER

Dutchess County Child Development Council (914) 473-4141
70 Overocker Road
Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

Child Care Council of Orange County (914) 294-4012
30 Matthews Street, Suite 104
Goshen, New York 10940

Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. (914) 425-0009
185 North Main Street
Spring Valley, New York 10986

Child Care Council of Westchester (914) 761-3456, Ext. 140
470 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, New York 10605

NEW JERSEY

Bergen County Office for Children (201) 646-3694
21 Main Street Court, Plaza S
Administration Building, Room 202 West
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

Child Care Connection, Inc. (609) 737-2418
2425 Pennington Road
Pennington, New Jersey 08534

Community Coordinated Child Care (973) 923-1433
225 Long Avenue
Hillside, New Jersey 07205

Programs for Parents (973) 744-4677
20 Church Street, Suite 11-12
Montclair, New Jersey 07042

CONNECTICUT

Child Care Infoline (800) 505-1000
1344 Silas Deane Highway
Rocky Hill, Connecticut